

LABOUR MONTHLY

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Editor : R. Palme Dutt



The Tory Offensive

A miner from Durham and a railwayman from London
tell how to fight back



Nyasaland Massacre

The plot exposed and the background given by
Hugo Rathbone

Other Articles include

COMMUNISM AND THE LEFT

R.P.D. sets out the facts
and discusses the arguments

YOUTH IN ENGINEERING

By John Foster

MACMILLAN'S VISIT

examined by Quacstor

WHAT SOVIET PEOPLE READ

told by Australian author
J. Waten

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SOME HAVE KNELT . . .

'WHAT AN EPIC story is the fight for liberty', writes a Sussex reader, stirred by recent events. It is true. The fight for liberty can show numberless examples of heroism and courage. Ordinary men and women have proved themselves capable of performing miracles; in the sense that Bernard Shaw made his churchman define a miracle as 'an event which creates faith.' In this last stage before we achieve full classless society, we find our faith in our fellow human beings created and recreated daily: and if in them—then also in ourselves. That is the measure of the importance of courage.

Take Blantyre. Two thousand miners marched in disciplined ranks to Blantyre, when the echoes of a terrible explosion had hardly died away, having resolved on a mass break-in to the pit to rescue 200 fellow miners lost there. Look at the pictures of the miners' wives watching them go, enduring it, not lifting a finger to stop them. That was Blantyre, eighty-two years ago. Look at the other Blantyre today. Agricultural labourers and their families being shot, beaten, arrested and held without trial, for demonstrating and organising protest withdrawal of labour: defending themselves by road blocks, cutting communications, using sticks and stones against machine guns. The name of Dr. David Livingstone's Scottish birthplace was given to this Nyasaland town; the African and British peoples have now been given a common reason never to forget it. 'If Britain grants Dominion status to 200,000 white settlers in 1960 against the will of 7,000,000 Africans it will be the parting of the ways', wrote the Secretary-General of the Southern Rhodesia African National

Congress, addressing our *Labour Monthly Colonial Conference* only last October. Now he is amongst those arrested, and the Congress has been suppressed by law. Will these Tory white supremacists ever learn? Must they be taught yet again that they cannot hold back the millions of Africans who, as Dr. W. E. B. DuBois wrote in *L.M.* two months ago, 'have freedom and human dignity to attain'. Northward, over the Kenya border, there are more arrests. Here too they have not learnt. During a recent criminal case, a barrister was harrying a witness, demanding why, if his story were true, did Africans who had been his friends, go into the witness-box and give evidence against him? He replied that many things had happened; people had been threatened; people had suffered in concentration camps; and he concluded with steady personal dignity: 'Some have knelt'. What terrifies white racists is that so many, many millions have not knelt, and will never now kneel.

There can be no true epic in our times which is not a fight for liberty—to reach freedom and then to move forward unhindered against nature. We shall find all the poets we need to describe—and to inspire—the deeds of liberty. Meanwhile, people make their own song as they struggle. Seeing the Scots miners marching down Kingsway last month, protesting against pit closures and unemployment, I was reminded of these verses, written by a miner:

Hark to the Marching People!

Hark to the tramping feet,

To the blazing Song of the Worker,

Demanding food to eat.

Remember the meeting they held there?

Remember the words that were said?

*The nods, the murmurs, soft curses,
As their children ran by underfed?*

(Continued on page iii of cover)

NOTES OF THE MONTH

Communism and the Left

THIS Easter takes place the 26th Congress of the Communist Party. It would be premature to anticipate its proceedings. The General Secretary, John Gollan, will comment on the significance of its outcome for the broad labour movement and the

political prospect in next month's May issue. Meanwhile there is some reason, in the midst of the pressure of present events, to focus attention at this moment on the role of the Communist Party in relation to the problems which now confront all socialists in Britain.

Our readers in Britain (if we may leave out of account for the moment our readers who buy this journal in fifty-five countries overseas, and whose indulgence we must ask if we concentrate this month on very domestic problems of the still lagging movement in this old once premier country of capitalism) include communists and non-communists. Most of the leading figures of the trade unions and the Labour Party during these past four decades, with the exception of a handful on the extreme right (including a few, like the present Lord Citrine, before they had passed over to the extreme right) have at one time or another contributed to our pages,

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even though their freely printed contributions may have sometimes conflicted with the general policy of the magazine or been frankly criticised. Our aim from our first number thirty-eight years ago has been to promote co-operation and mutual understanding of all sections in the common cause of the working class and socialism.

Therefore, if at this moment a *serious* fresh discussion (not the repetition of jargon, not the familiar accusations and counter-accusations) of the present position and prospect of communism and the labour movement is suggested as desirable and even urgently necessary, there is no question here of a special sectional concern, but of the vital interests of the whole movement.

Dilemma of the Left

Many good friends in the trade unions and the Labour Party, while recognising and appreciating the work of individual communists in one or another sphere of activity, have tended up to the present to query the existence and justification of the Communist Party in this country. They have regarded it as a splinter organisation of the left, cut off from rights of equal participation in the mass political labour movement represented by the Labour Party, and therefore ineffective and mistaken as an organisation, whatever the merits of its individual members. Hence they have preferred to see in the Labour Party the political instrument for the victory of socialism in Britain. Recognising that the domination of the traditional right-wing policy and leadership for the past half century represents an obstacle to this aim, they have seen the path forward through the development of the left, as a kind of constitutional opposition, loyally maintaining separation from the Communist Party, and advancing gradually to a future majority position and leadership which will be able to carry through a legislative programme establishing socialism in Britain. Such has been the general theory of many friends and respected militant representatives of the non-communist left in the Labour Party.

Recent events have begun to throw into question these assumptions more seriously than at any time previously during the half century of existence of the Labour Party. What are these new developments which have created what may be described as a certain dilemma of the left in the Labour Party? Three in particular may be noted.

Blow No. 1 : Labour Party Rejection of Socialism

The first is the official rejection of the aim of socialism by the new Labour Party programme. The new programme is not a casual document. It is the outcome of three years of elaborate policy preparation, under the general guidance of Mr. Gaitskell and his associates of the 'New Thinkers' school, with the explicit and avowed objective of jettisoning for ever the traditional aim of socialism in the sense of the social ownership of the means of production. It is true that the word 'socialism' has not been abandoned. Indeed, when it was discovered that the first draft of the pamphlet *The Future Labour Offers You* had forgotten the sacred word, hasty steps were taken to add the present irrelevant postscript at the end to bring it in. But the shibboleth in the new programme is defined in a series of empty high-sounding ethical platitudes ('mutual service', 'true freedom', 'social justice'), equally acceptable to the Tory Central Office, the City, *The Times*, or the Archbishop of Canterbury. The use of the word alone proves nothing. Hitler also used the word 'socialism' to describe his programme (and it was, oddly enough, accepted at face value by the *Daily Herald* editorial 'Hitler's May Day' on May 2, 1933). What matters here is not jugglery with words. What matters is the plain elementary reality of socialism as universally understood by the entire socialist movement from the outset, including the socialist participators in the foundation of the Labour Party, that is, the ending of the class ownership of the means of production, the ending of exploitation, of rent, interest and profit, and its replacement by the social ownership of the means of production. This is the socialism which the Labour Party has now officially repudiated in favour of a theory of a reformed capitalism, with state participation in the private capitalist monopolies.

A New Situation

Thus a new situation has been created. Ever since the nominal adoption of a socialistic aim ('common ownership of the means of production') by the Labour Party in 1918, it could be argued, and was widely argued, that, however contrary the practical policy of the right wing leadership, the ultimate aim of socialism was adequately represented by the Labour Party, and that the Communist Party was therefore superfluous. This avenue of argument is now closed. Of the four national political parties, the Conservative, Liberal, Labour and Communist Parties, the Communist Party is today the only political party which represents the aim of socialism.

Towards New Advance—but How?

It can still be argued, and correctly argued, that this disastrous retreat to mid-Victorian 'Lib-Lab' theories of co-operation with capitalism must be fought and defeated. Assuredly. The reign of Mr. Gaitskell and his 'New Thinker' colleagues is not eternal, and may even prove short-lived. Mass unemployment has already begun to deal these antiquated theories some shrewd blows. We can be certain that the working class will eventually find their way forward beyond the swamp; that the united strength of all the socialist and militant sections of the working class organisations will finally defeat the apostles of reaction. But how? Through what forms? Policy? Organisation? Leadership? Victory is never won by waiting for it and praying for the discomfiture of one's adversaries. Victory in the whole history of the working class movement has always and only been won by organisation and leadership. Where is 'the Left' in any organised sense in the Labour Party capable of rallying the masses and assailing and conquering the entrenched fortress of the right wing domination of the Executive and Transport House? It is here that we come to the second horn of the present acute dilemma of the left in the Labour Party.

Blow No. 2: Demobilisation of the Bevanite Left

The second new development which has brought sharply into the forefront the problems of socialists and those with left sympathies in the Labour Party is the visible demobilisation or individual dispersal into a remarkable variety of directions of the former very active grouping who were associated with Mr. Bevan and came to be described as the 'Bevanite Left'.

Mr. Bevan in the preceding period was the great Challenger from the Left. He had, with the agility which reveals the flair of political genius, resigned from the doomed Attlee Labour Government just in time before its downfall, having previously sponsored the fantastic £4,700 million rearmament programme in parliament in January and then resigning over the consequent health charges in April. He described Mr. Gaitskell, who as Chancellor of the Exchequer had been responsible for introducing the health charges, as a 'dessicated calculating machine'. He forewent his assured position on the Executive as the idol of the constituency parties in order to challenge the massed hostility of the reformist trade union bureaucracy by contesting the Treasurership. He was menaced with

expulsion by the angry Executive Committee, as he had already been expelled before on the eve of the second world war; and he was only saved from expulsion a second time by the support of the rank and file.

Mr. Bevan's Role

Today he has left his unruly past behind him. He sits in the Holy of Holies at the right hand of Mr. Gaitskell (or should we say 'left hand' in the new Duumvirate?) and is elected unopposed to the Treasurership. He has become an Elder Statesman. It is even possible that in his new position he may be able to attempt some significant initiative towards a step forward in foreign policy, provided he is able and willing to loosen the fetters of current official policy of the cold war and nuclear strategy, to which Labour is at present committed. But his role as Leader of the Left is, for the time being at any rate, suspended. What the future may hold, only further development of events and of the internal alignment within the Labour Party will show. There is no doubt that there is overwhelming potential support within the labour movement for any advance from the present disastrous cold war policy. Meanwhile his principal and other colleagues in this temporary Left grouping, like Mr. Harold Wilson and Mr. Robens, had made their peace earlier. Mr. Crossman remains the versatile Mr. Crossman.

Three and Twenty Leaders of Revolt

This is not a new story in the history of the Labour Party. It is an old story. It has gone on for fifty years in one form and another. One grouping after another has sought to present itself as the up and coming left grouping within the Labour Party, which would end the right wing domination, and show the correct path forward as against the mistaken and hopelessly ineffective role of the Communist Party. During these four decades every such grouping has successively disappeared without trace, while the Communist Party has continued to advance, despite the admittedly limited scale so far under existing conditions, not only in numbers and strength over the whole period (a twelvefold increase in membership from its beginning up to the present day), but above all in strength in the basic organisations of the working class which will finally decide the future of the Labour Party.

Forty Years of the Labour Left

Consider the record of the Labour Left during these four decades. There was the role of 'the Clydesiders', whose advent to parliament in 1922 was widely described as the beginning of a new era, and who registered their victory of the Left by ejecting Mr. Clynes from leadership of the Labour Party, and installing the eloquent idol of the Left, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald (worshipped for his partial protest at the imperialist war in 1914, and the universal denunciation by the entire jingo press as a public enemy and traitor during the war) as Leader of the Labour Party. Then came the role of the Independent Labour Party and its 'Socialism In Our Time' programme presented as the alternative to the programme of Macdonald, and offering the policy of the 'living wage' to lead the attack on poverty by the state regulation of wages and prices and thus enable the working class to reach socialism 'not through starvation, but through an era of prosperity'. Then came the role of the Cook-Maxton Manifesto and Campaign. Then came the role of the Socialist League, led by Sir Stafford Cripps until its banning and dissolution. And after the war there has been the role of the 'Keep Left' grouping of back-bench Labour M.P.s (including Woodrow Wyatt) during the Labour Government, followed by the Bevanite Left and its unhappy ending.

Time to Draw the Lesson

This successive repeated experience proves that what is here involved is something more than a question of individuals or individual leaders or the passing over of individual leaders. The uniformity of the successive experience, beneath all the detail variations, establishes the character of a law. It is further worth noting that the successive groupings have tended to diminish in strength rather than otherwise. The Clydesiders were able to change the Leader of the Labour Party. The I.L.P. at the height of its 'Socialism In Our Time' agitation had over 100 M.P.s. The Socialist League led by Cripps united many leading personalities in Labour's ranks, and founded *Tribune* as an organ of the united front. The Bevanite Left included a number of popular figures, and was able to use an effective agitational press organ in the post-war *Tribune*, which, whatever the somewhat erratic confusion of its policy apart from its consistent anti-communism, and despite the slight uncertainty how far its editorial personnel belong to the Beaverbrook stable or vice versa, with apparent interchangeability of editors, has

been edited with professional skill and has had the advantage of millionaire financial backing.

'Victory for Socialism'

Today Mr. Mikardo and others have been endeavouring to gather together a somewhat weakened reflection of what remains of the former Bevanite Left, after the departure of its most prominent personalities, through 'Victory for Socialism'. With the best will in the world to every sincere effort to carry forward the fight for a socialist policy in the Labour Party, it cannot but be recognised that this grouping is so far very weak, probably weaker than any previous left grouping in the Labour Party; has already been called to heel by the Executive, forbidden to build up an organisation, and compelled to promise submission; and is thus reduced to the role of a modest medium for discussion rather than any significant organised force.

How to Rally the Left?

Hence the lessons of this experience need now to be very seriously discussed by all who wish to carry forward the fight for socialism and a left policy in the Labour Party. There is no lack of sincere socialists in the Labour Party, however frustrated they may feel under present conditions. Our postbag from our readers gives abundant evidence of this. But all are seeking to find the way forward, though there is not yet agreement on this. The 'Labour Left' is rather the description of a trend, a mood, an aspiration, of a multiplicity of individuals and policies, awaiting ruefully the permanent defeat which is the destiny of all spontaneous unorganised movements in the face of organisation, instead of the united strength of a common leadership, policy, organisation and action capable of defeating the entrenched machine of the right wing leadership. Nor is the melancholy of this situation overcome by trying to paint rosy colours of hopeful illusion around the existing right wing policy. Oil and water do not mix. What is to be done?

The Communist Party's Answer to the Left Dilemma

The founders of the Communist Party had had abundant experience of these problems of the left fight in the trade unions and the Labour Party already in the stormy years before the first world war and during the first world war. It was this experience which led them to the conclusion that the only decisive path forward from

the morass of transient waves of left emotions alongside the permanent entrenchment of right wing domination lay through the establishment of a political party of the fight for socialism, a political party of a new type (here the experience of bolshevism and international communism helped), not in opposition to the rest of the organised working class movement, but rooted in the industrial working class and the mass organisations of the working class, combining Marxist theory with the daily mass struggle, conducting the fight for socialist politics against capitalist and sectional politics, and thus step by step, through a long and tenacious struggle, breaking the domination of the right wing leadership and policies, and winning the organised strength of the working class and its allies to achieve political power and the victory of socialism.

Experience of Forty Years

That was close on forty years ago. The experience of these forty years, including the outcome of all these successive transient left movements rising and falling and disappearing, has in the opinion of communists proved the correctness of this fundamental conception. This experience has, through all the problems, difficulties, setbacks and admitted mistakes in the course of the political struggle, demonstrated the establishment of an indestructible base in the industrial working class and working class organisations. It has provided the spearhead for the advance of the left fight throughout the labour movement (not least through the creation and maintenance of the only independent daily working class newspaper, the *Daily Worker*, after the Labour Party and Trades Union Congress, with all their finance and millions of members had had to admit failure in this sphere and surrender to the millionaire press lords). Thereby it is creating the conditions for the eventual transformation of the political labour movement.

Ending Bans and Proscriptions

Undoubtedly the affiliation of the Communist Party to the Labour Party in accordance with its original federal basis, as initially proposed by the Communist Party, would have provided the most favourable conditions for the constitutional evolution of the Labour Party to the new stage. The right wing leadership, recognising this, repudiated the old federal basis of unity, refused affiliation, and proceeded to impose extending bans and proscriptions to prevent a democratic settlement of the issues within the organised working

class movement. All the bans and proscriptions have not been able to break the ties of the Communist Party with the organised working class, or the influence of its campaigning and daily newspaper to assist the forward struggle of all sections of the labour movement. But the ending of these bans and proscriptions, and closer common understanding and co-operation of all sections of the left and the Communist Party, is now of vital importance to defeat the menace of existing right wing policies and speed the common victory.

Blow No. 3 : Cracks in the Capitalist Idol

The third new development which has brought sharply to the forefront the problem of the path of advance of socialists in Britain today is the new economic-political situation. For fourteen years rosewater illusions were spread of a new magically transformed capitalism. Full employment was guaranteed for ever. Coal production could never overtake demand; and only the narrow parochial bigotry of working miners hindered the influx of the hordes of fascist refugees which the Government and their right wing officials tried to force upon them. The ancient spectres of unemployment and poverty had been exorcised by the new booming prosperous Western imperialist economies. The only remaining problems were spiritual problems of the better use of plenty and leisure; juvenile delinquency; a plea for a little philanthropy for the poor backward countries (who might otherwise fall for communism). Marxist economic theories, to which the moribund, benighted and hopelessly formula-ridden Communist Party still clung, were a pathetic Victorian relic wholly irrelevant to the marvellous new mid-twentieth century capitalism.

The Morning After

All this cheap stale tripe, repeating the old, old fairy tales that are spread during every boom and always find new suckers among the young and innocent, was not only multiplied wholesale by the professional 'Ain't capitalism lovely' sunshine merchants of the millionaire press. It was spread especially by the spokesmen of the Labour Party on all sides. Endless books, pamphlets, study syllabuses and articles were poured out to 'prove' the theory with the aid of transparently spurious official statistics. The right wing revelled in the new theories, and drew the conclusion that it was now time to 'consolidate' rather than to go in for any rash new socialist experiments. Many on the left also fell for the new

illusions, but urged that, while the immediate material problems had been solved, it was still important to go on to socialism. The Communist Party was at the outset almost alone in exposing the economic realities of capitalism, and in particular the realities of imperialist Britain's position in the modern world and the consequences which existing policies would bring (the first explicit warning at the Nineteenth Congress in November, 1945). Today the ball is over. The morning after is here. The 'antiquated', 'discredited', 'obsolete' Marxist theory is once again demonstrated in living practice with remarkable precision. Capitalism is still capitalism, despite all the new frills. The class struggle is still the class struggle. Ask the miners who came to march in London.

Significance of the Anti-communist Offensive

Therefore it is inevitable that the Communist Party now comes into the centre of the picture more than ever. Read any of the recent Court of Enquiry Reports. Read the Report of the right wing dominated E.C. about the Amalgamated Engineering Union, North London District. Listen to the President of the National Union of Manufacturers denouncing all shop stewards as 'largely communist-inspired' and 'an excrescence on the trade unions' whose powers must be curtailed (presidential address to the annual meeting of the National Union of Manufacturers on November 27, 1958). Observe the unscrupulous press attack on a major union, the Electrical Trades Union, the seventh largest in Britain, with one of the most democratic constitutions of any union, while the most openly and notoriously undemocratic unions, maintained by undemocratic means under right wing control, are left free from a hint of criticism by these 'democratic' critics. Note how every trade union election is nowadays blazoned in the big press like a parliamentary by-election, with the entire machinery of the millionaire press and hundreds of millions of propaganda sheets churned out through its agency to mobilise the vote against the communist candidate. Why was 'Iris' formed? Who pays for it? Or 'Aims of Industry' and all the rest of the high-paid troupe?

Anti-Communism in 'Left' Disguise

Another characteristic sign of the times further indicates how the present intensified anti-communist offensive reflects the sharpening of the class struggle, and the consequent fear of the Communist Party and of advancing left trends among the workers. This is

the development of a specialised section of the anti-communist offensive to endeavour to reach militant workers in suitable guise. Alongside the big blast of the open right-wing anti-communist campaign, like a minor shrill accompaniment, there has developed the proliferation of little journals and bulletins, in some cases on the basis of lavish American finance, designed to appeal to and confuse left opinion with ultra-militant slogans to cover the essential content of hostility and venom against the Communist Party and the socialist world—always in the name of ‘true Marxism’ and ‘true communism’.

An Old Story

This is an old story, long familiar in the working class movement. So it was in the Kronstadt revolt, when the White Guards sought to muscle in on the genuine dissatisfactions among sections of sailors by spreading the slogan ‘Soviets without the Communist Party’ to disguise their real aims. So it was with the first Hungarian counter-revolution forty years ago, when the Hungarian Soviet Republic created by the Hungarian people was overthrown by Western arms and replaced by the Peidl Social Democratic Government proclaiming itself the representative of ‘pure democracy’ and ‘true socialism’, only to give place within the shortest time, as soon as the deceptive slogans had done their work, to the bloodiest Horthy Fascism and White Terror, with which Hungarian Social Democracy proceeded to sign an official Treaty of Alliance. So it was with the second and unsuccessful Hungarian counter-revolutionary attempt thirty-seven years later, when once again the slogans of ‘true democracy’ and ‘true socialism’ and ‘true communism’ were used to open the streets to the pogrom merchants, the Jew-baiters, the burners of the books and the trampers of the red flag. Observe today how in the most hotly contested trade union elections a single front is formed from Catholic Action to the Trotskyists behind one candidate, rather like the ill-famed ‘August bloc’ which presaged the victory of the Bolshevik Party, in order to defeat the candidate supported by the communists and the left.

Leading the Fight

In the present sharpened class situation the Communist Party is inevitably in the forefront of the fight. In face of the slump, the mass dismissals, the myriad problems confronting all sections of the workers, the Communist Party does not spend its time in saying

'I told you so'. The Communist Party is the only party to put forward a concrete programme of action to combat the slump, to fight the mass dismissals and redundancy, and to mobilise the organised strength of the workers for the fight. At the same time the Communist Party puts forward its political programme for the defeat of Toryism and for the tasks of a new Government based on the labour movement. Equally the Communist Party puts out its long-term programme for the advance to socialism, and is indeed the only political party to publish a concrete programme, not merely of the aims of socialism, but of the means to achieve it within the conditions of Britain—*The British Road To Socialism*.

Towards New Advance

The special fury of hostility of all capitalist expression, right, left and centre, against communism and the Communist Party at the present moment is thus a sign of the times—a symptom of the deteriorating economic-political situation from the standpoint of capitalism. Violent denunciation of communism and the Communist Party is nothing new. Its music has sounded in our ears for forty years. Predictions of the disintegration and approaching collapse of the Communist Party are nothing new. They have been repeated every year with monotonous reiteration for forty years; and at the end of it all the Communist Party is many times stronger. The present intensified fury is thus not a sign of the strength of capitalism, but of its weakness. A desperate three-pronged offensive was let loose by imperialist reaction, through Suez, through the counter-revolutionary putsch in Hungary, and through the attempt to disrupt the Western Communist Parties. The offensive has failed on all three fronts. After all the battering of the enemy assault, it is significant that the registration figure of Communist Party membership this year (a strict test, since the annual registration is carried out with severe accuracy in the Communist Party, unlike the very loose and unreliable figures of individual membership in the Labour Party) shows an increase—slight, but an increase—on a year ago. The tide moves. We are advancing into new conditions and a new era from the old era of poisoned illusions, into conditions of severe struggle and testing, but also opening the prospect of new advance of the working class, and with it, of the Communist Party. Towards these aims the Easter Congress will make its contribution.

March 7, 1959.

R.P.D.

MACMILLAN'S VISIT

Quaestor

WHEN the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary left for Moscow on February 21, ill-suppressed differences were still noticeable in the Tory ranks about whether they should have gone at all. Criticism among Britain's allies in the cold war—the capitalist politicians of West Germany, the U.S.A. and France—was more than noticeable, it was inescapable. But for the time being all the cat-calling became insignificant. It was less important than the very obvious anxiety of the British public that the Ministers should bring back something hopeful. The special correspondents who went to Moscow ahead of the Premier, with one or two notorious exceptions, underlined in their messages the good will of the Soviet people encountered by them on all sides (and also, by the way, recorded their astonishment at the great material improvements in Soviet life for which they had been totally unprepared—thanks to the falsehoods in their own press). The exchanges of speeches between the two sides published in the Soviet newspapers, and the semi-official hints by British spokesmen about the progress of the talks, also combined to keep public hopes high—and not only the hopes of the mass of the people. Stock Exchange reporters on February 23 and 24 were emphatic about the 'buoyancy' of shares on account of the news from Moscow.

Then, on the evening of the 24th, began a three days' outcry about the election speeches of Khrushchov and Mikoyan, in which the Soviet leaders did no more than repeat the well-known propositions of the Soviet Government for making West Berlin a free city under international guarantee, and for preparing the way for German unity by an agreement between the two German Republics, following which a peace treaty could be signed with them, separately or together. Furthermore Khrushchov publicly offered Great Britain the non-aggression pact which Macmillan himself had said, a week before, he was prepared to sign. This offer, in defiance of ordinary common sense, the *Daily Telegraph* now called 'a calculated trap', while the Foreign Office, which knew better, allowed the newspapers to scream that the subject had not been mentioned in the talks. At the same time they broke out in a chorus of denunciation, in which even Khrushchov's failure to accompany Macmillan to Kiev was denounced on February 27 as 'a further blow to hopes' (*Manchester Guardian*), 'wrecking the talks' (*Daily*

Herald) or reducing their temperature 'down to freezing point' (*Daily Express*). The triumphant *Daily Telegraph* announced in big letters 'Moscow Mission Negative'. The visit had been 'a disappointment', echoed the *Sunday Times* on March 1.

In the light of the real nature of the Soviet Ministers' speeches—which the British public was, as usual, not allowed by its newspapers to read—and of the truth about the Soviet non-aggression proposals which leaked out later, this whole hullabaloo must be understood as an attempt to squeeze a little more out of the Soviet leaders than they were prepared to give: a graceless, but by no means unprecedented, weapon in the diplomatic armoury of Downing Street. From another angle, it was an indication by the Government that it thought it had reached a compromise between concessions to the opinions of the British people—essential for electoral purposes—and continued adherence to the anti-Soviet alliance. And when the Soviet Note to the western imperialist Powers, with its firm but conciliatory language, offering to open the road to a summit meeting by attending a Foreign Ministers' conference, was put into Macmillan's hands on March 1, the visit suddenly ceased to be a 'disappointment'.

The communiqué published on March 4 did not require the newspapers' recommendation to be assured of a warm reception from the British people. It emphasised and re-emphasised the agreement of the two Governments on the importance of the Geneva negotiations on stopping nuclear tests—a polite repudiation of the American efforts at every stage to disrupt them. It declared for early negotiations on 'questions relating to Germany', including Berlin and a peace treaty—mentioning the unresolved 'juridical and political aspects of the problems involved', but for the first time omitting reference to that notorious instrument of sabotage the demand for immediate 'unification through free elections'. It pledged further study of proposals for limitation of forces and weapons, under appropriate inspection, 'in an agreed area of Europe'. Its statement that both Prime Ministers agree 'that differences between nations should be resolved by negotiation and not by force', was not a mere platitude, coming at the moment it did. It meant the abandonment by the British Government, at any rate, of the hypocritical pretence that the Soviet proposals on Berlin were an 'ultimatum', a 'threat of force', etc.—and thereby laid that threat fairly and squarely where it belonged, *i.e.*, at the door of the United States Government, whose political and military gangsters have been talk-

ing so loudly about using tanks and planes to 'break through to Berlin'. At the same time, the British delegation made perfectly clear its own restricted understanding of the pledge—by declining to discuss the Soviet draft of a non-aggression pact. Lastly, the communiqué provided for the despatch of British missions to Moscow, to discuss plans for more trade between the two countries and for wider cultural contacts—incidentally, bringing Great Britain thereby into line, in the one case with France and West Germany (which have recently renewed trade agreements with the U.S.S.R.), in the other with the United States (which has a functioning cultural agreement with the U.S.S.R.).

In this way Macmillan's visit, for all the manœuvring around it, objectively opened the way for a lessening of international tension. Provided it is sustained vigorously by the British people, its undertakings can really be made the starting point of a break in the clouds. Moreover, it imposed a real obligation on the British Government. As the *Economist* wrote on March 7:

This, in fact, is the major development on the western side since the crisis began. One of the western leaders is now publicly committed, by his words in Moscow, to serious and exhaustive negotiation.

And that, of course, is the very reason why the Moscow communiqué was met in the U.S.A. with hostility among the political leaders, with new threats and frantic appeals to 'close the ranks' and 'stand firm'—which Mr. Rayburn, Speaker of the House of Representatives, obligingly explained on March 6 meant firmness not only towards the U.S.S.R. but also towards America's allies—'firm all round'. Firm for what purpose? There is no mystery about it. The United States Government is determined to keep its own troops in West Berlin, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee made clear in a statement issued on March 10. It would not 'accept' the German Democratic Republic taking over Soviet rights—although the Soviet Government did accept the unilateral decision of the western capitalist bloc to hand over their rights in West Germany. Talk of more expenditure on nuclear long-range missiles, and a campaign against reducing budget expenditure on the U.S. army, immediately began, culminating in a direct declaration by President Eisenhower (March 11) that nuclear weapons would be used if there were 'any threat, or any push in the direction of hostilities'. What threat? He did not say. But the Senate Committee's statement, quoted above, gave the answer: the need to deal with the German Democratic Republic. Sooner than recognise

it, the U.S.A. is prepared to go to war—that was the meaning of Eisenhower's statement.

Needless to say, the same attitude was taken up by Adenauer's government. Moreover, both directly in Macmillan's talks at Paris after Adenauer had met de Gaulle, and indirectly through inspired statements in the American press, the British Premier was given to understand that it was not enough for him to repudiate (as he did in Paris) the idea of military disengagement in Europe—withdrawal of foreign troops from Germany, or from a wider area. It was 'dangerous and misleading' even 'to talk of a *thinning* of military forces in Germany without raising the question of German unification', the U.S.A., French, and West German Governments had told Macmillan (message in *The Times*, March 11, from its Washington correspondent quoting the *New York Times* as authority). By the time these lines appear in print, no doubt the Prime Minister will have been told the same in Washington. These statements—echoed during the second week of March in numerous press messages from Paris and Bonn—not only show who is responsible for maintaining international tension in Europe by insisting on keeping foreign troops on German territory and maintaining them in the heart of the German Democratic Republic. They also throw an interesting light on the real—as distinct from the pretended—attitude of the Western Powers on the question of German unification. If there is one thing they know, it is that the Soviet Union will not (i) allow them to overrun the G.D.R. peacefully; (ii) abandon it to its fate if they attack it; (iii) withdraw from its obligations to the G.D.R. under the Warsaw Pact if NATO remains in existence with West Germany part of it; (iv) take decisions with them about unifying Germany over the heads of the Germans, as Hitler and Chamberlain dismembered Czechoslovakia over the heads of its people in 1938, and the British, Greek and Turkish Governments robbed Cyprus of the independence its people demanded in 1959. That being so, what is the point of their insisting on, or threatening, any or all of these things?

Merely this, that their real aim is to keep Germany divided, if they cannot get it united as a monopoly-capitalist State in alliance with them. Better West Germany as a separate State, but dominated by Big Business and the militarists, than steps to bring the two German Republics together, holding out the 'menace' of their later evolution towards a peaceful, non-militarist Socialist united Germany. That is the real policy of the United States government and its satellites towards Germany—whatever the risks to international

peace. Why should they pursue it? An answer clear as crystal came from that mouthpiece of the most violent enemies of the U.S.S.R. and lickspittles of the U.S.A. within the Tory Party, the *Daily Telegraph*—outstanding for its hostility from the first to Macmillan's visit to Moscow—in an editorial on February 20 which attracted all too little attention. A reunified, neutralised Germany—under joint East-West controls to ensure that it stayed that way—'would be an arrangement wholly militating against the free world', because at present Germany has a 'natural Western bias', and this would 'in time' be removed by its neutralisation. And this must be ruled out, said the editorial. The British Government 'cannot agree to adopt policies which would endanger one of the central pivots of present British security: the pro-Western orientation of the German Government and people'.

Thus with one leap we are back in the world of 1933-1939—after Hitler came to power: the time when the Tories fed themselves on the illusion and spread it among the British people and many nations, that a Germany of large-scale monopoly capitalism, with a militarist clique and official bureaucracy equally with Big Business soaked with the idea of 'Deutschland uber alles' and revenge for its defeat in war (then once, now twice), can be a 'central pivot of British security', 'pro-Western and anti-Russian'. All the lessons of the first and the second world wars have been thrown aside—and once again the theory of the 'one-way gun', the gun which will only go off against the Russians, emerges in all its murderous imbecility. That is why they insisted on West German rearmament in 1954 and on wrecking the chances of peace opened in 1955 at the Geneva Summit conference (by their insistence on immediate 'unification through free elections'). Thirty million people paid with their lives, in 1939-45, for precisely the kind of gamble on German Imperialism's 'pro-Western orientation' which the *Daily Telegraph* now declares is the policy of the Tory Government—and on which it is not repudiated when it does so.

The enemies of peace were weakened by the talks in Moscow and the Macmillan-Khrushchov communiqué. They have been weakened by being forced to uncover their hand, as in the *Daily Telegraph's* monstrous editorial. But that is a long way from their defeat. To achieve that, the British labour movement first and foremost must bring the weight of its influence to bear on the Tories and on its own leaders, to demand a swift and uncompromising break with the policy of Eisenhower and the British Die-hards.

THE TORY OFFENSIVE: how to fight back

[Last month we published an article in three parts entitled 'The Tory Offensive'. It contained firstly an analysis of what policy Mr. Gaitskell had to offer to defeat the threat to employment; and secondly, two descriptions of how the workers had already begun to fight back, with details about miners from Scotland and engineers from Yorkshire. This month we print contributions from Frank McKenna, a locomotive driver, and from George Alsop, a miner. Each gives the picture in his particular industry, pit or depot; how to get the necessary strength which only unity can supply, step by step; how to force vital information from employers and right wing leaders; why the venom against 'left' unions; and many other problems, some of which are new, and need fresh and original thinking. Above all, and at the heart of every successful fight back, is the need to challenge the assumptions behind the crazy capitalist economics which assert that rich pits are 'uneconomic', and that railway transport in this congested island 'does not pay'. It is, of course, capitalism that is uneconomic, that does not pay: and it is this which the British worker is now being forced to discover at the same time as he is forced to fight to defend his livelihood. Next month we shall hope to print further contributions from workers in our great industries, exchanging invaluable experiences of this struggle.—Ed., L.M.]

1. 'Claymore' Economics on the Railways

FRANK McKENNA, St. Pancras locomotive driver, writes:

WHAT can be done to stop the rot in the railway industry? Today, thousands of railwaymen await with trepidation for the axe to fall on their jobs, their depots and their homes. For the British Transport Commission are now putting into action their plans for rationalisation of the railway industry. It is the 'claymore' economics of cut, cut, cut. In the near future, redundancy for thousands, smaller wage packets for most and the fear of the sack for all, whatever their grade. The picture painted to local trade union representatives is one of speed-up in all departments.

For thirteen years Britain's railway workers have been the worst paid and hardest worked section of the British working class. Low

wages, outdated machinery and equipment, excessive hours to make ends meet and the most stringent opposition to pension rights and sick pay schemes—all this has been their reward for keeping the railways running throughout the war and the resulting fuel crises. 'Job security' and 'better times will come' have been the hope of all railwaymen who have remained loyal to their industry in this period. Now these vital aspects of railway employment are vanishing. Railwaymen face a future compounded of sackings, short time, redundancy, all-round speed-up and a most vicious attack on trade union rights and conditions.

Men are being lost to the industry at the rate of 10,000 yearly. Recruiting is at a standstill. Since 1947, 500 depots and stations have been closed: since 1948, nearly 3,000 miles of track have either been closed or are to be lifted up. The economists of the British Transport Commission seem determined to close all but the largest of passenger stations—travel between to be by bus. Each section of the line has 'to pay their way' or be closed down. In the period since nationalisation, locomotive efficiency has improved by 35 per cent over pre-war, with a 10,000 drop of locomotives in service. Traffic per ton mile is now at its highest ever—this with a drop of 100,000 wagons since 1948. Heavy freight, such as coal, steel and iron ore, is being carried by the railways at a price estimated at one-sixth below the economic price. This is the 'service to the people' which Tory nationalisation has brought about!

Facing the craziest 'rationalisation' programme ever to beset the industry, the three rail unions seem incapable of halting the onslaught against their members. The past years of 'labour-management co-operation' have done their work well for the Big Business men who staff and control the area boards. Railwaymen have 'co-operated' thousands of their fellow workers onto the scrap heap. Acceptance of joint consultation—work study and the joint productivity council means that two gangs of fitters will now do the work of three; lengthmen will do with two gangs work previously done by three; signal boxes will be wiped out by the score; and longer, heavier, faster trains will be the lot of the train crews. Consultation between management and men on projected economies and closures is admitted to be a way of picking the brains and experience of the railwaymen in order to extend economies and reduce staff.

Right-wing trade union leadership at all levels has ham-strung for years past the just claims of our railway workers. Impoverishment of thousands of railworkers' families seems secondary to those

propagandists of inter-union sectionalism who riddle the industry, confusing and dividing the workers. What must be done, now?

1. The responsibility for the enormous interest burdens—which none of these rationalisers has found 'uneconomic'—must be borne by the Treasury, not by the industry.

2. The trade unions must divorce themselves from labour-management relationships and concentrate entirely on wages and conditions.

3. The 40-hour week conceded now. No sackings. Where there is 'redundancy'—overtime must be banned: no rest day working; plenty of men kept for relief.

4. No farming out to private contractors building and repair work.

5. Proper consultation on every projected economy measure.

6. Railways as the fastest and safest transport should be strengthened and not emasculated.

7. All trade union branches to demand reversal of present lunatic economy drive; 100 per cent membership.

8. Re-nationalisation of road haulage. No tracks to be closed: T.U.C. to prevent battle for traffic between road services and railways, in interests of public safety; a national conference of all transport unions.

9. The unions must demand from a Labour Government a real Socialist programme for the railways, with the workers making a full contribution at all levels.

If these proposals are achieved by trade union militancy, railwaymen would become proud fighters for further socialist nationalisation.

2. Force out the Facts on Pit Closures

George Alsop, Durham miner :

The fight of Scottish and Welsh miners has now become the fight for Durham miners. If the miners are to defeat the policy of redundancy, the strongest possible unity is needed. The National Coal Board are using various methods to put across this question of redundancy. (A miner does not get the sack nowadays, he is either 'redundant' or 'released').

The pet theory is that many of our pits in Durham are costly and 'uneconomic' to run and therefore the vital question of 'economy' must be faced. In other words, wages must be reduced in order that coal can be produced at cheaper cost. Further they

declare that personnel must be reduced, and at the same time, personnel must increase production.

In *Plan for Coal* (1950) our Divisional Board declared that 18,700 miners in West Durham and 9,600 in East Durham, would be redundant. In 1955 National Coal Board representatives met National Union of Mineworkers district and branch representatives to discuss my colliery, Chopwell. It was stated that 500 out of 1,000 miners would be redundant in five or six years. It was during this period (1955) of comparative security that the Communist Party in a leaflet drew the attention of the Durham miners and particularly the people of Chopwell to this serious position and called for immediate action. This was deemed 'scaremongering' by right-wing Labour Party leaders and those who do not understand Tory policy and Tory economics and their eventual repercussions. However, this problem is now knocking hard on the door of the Durham miner and his family. Two collieries have been closed recently. The Coal Board boast that the men have been placed at neighbouring collieries, but it is obvious that transferring redundant miners to other collieries will reach saturation point.

My colliery had been informed by the Coal Board that 34 men must be transferred to more economic pits in the near locality by March 21, 1959. By May 30 the Board intend to close a seam resulting in 150 men being classed redundant with no guarantee of employment. When asked what guarantee is there of continuity of employment for men transferred to other collieries, the Board can give no assurance.

Our General Secretary* admits the position of Durham miners is very serious. He has first-hand knowledge of the Board's intentions to close a number of collieries in Durham.

In such a situation labour and communist must get together to find a solution to our problems. The labour movement based on the Durham miners must launch a campaign to unite the community behind a policy for Durham's future. It should include the following demands:

The Coal Board must be forced to give the vital information of pit closures to the miners, county council and local authorities. The miners should be allowed to examine the colliery books and know the details of coal reserves, working costs and the selling price of coal.

The Government should support the efforts of the county council by

*Mr. Sam Watson, who in replying at the Labour Party Conference to the debate on fuel policy on behalf of the executive, said: 'Theoretically if we want the maximum efficiency we should be ruthless in cutting off the wholly uneconomic elements'. (October 3, 1958.)

directing industry to Durham to provide work for displaced men and to give our children a choice of employment.

Interest charges on compensation to former coalowners of £16,500,000 annually must be ended.

No pit closures where there is coal to be worked.

The price of Durham coal (among the world's finest) to private industry to be raised to an economic level.

Seven hour day for underground men; eight hour day for surface workers.

Three weeks holiday with pay.

A campaign based on these demands would stimulate the labour movement to make progress towards socialism, the ultimate solution of our social problems.

THE HANDEL BI-CENTENARY

April 14, 1959, is the 200th anniversary of the death in London of George Frideric Handel.

The International Handel Society, founded in 1952 with the support of the Ministry of Culture of the German Democratic Republic, holds annual congresses and festivals in Halle, the composer's birthplace. During this year's festival four operas and four oratorios, including the Messiah, as well as many of Handel's lesser vocal and instrumental works will be performed. The programme also includes concerts of works by living British, French, German and Russian composers, including Benjamin Britten, Alan Bush, Ernst Hermann Meyer, Dmitri Shostakovich and Georgi Sviridov.

An article on this Festival by Alan Bush will appear in a later issue of Labour Monthly.

PAST CONTENTS

JANUARY: *Outlook for 1959* (R.P.D.); *Robert Burns* (William Gallacher); *New Trade Policies for Old* (John Eaton); *Seven Year Plan* (Andrew Rothstein); *Why I Joined* (Councillor Hilda Lane); *Background to Berlin* (Gordon Schaffer); *My Experiences in a Chinese Commune* (David Crook). BOOK REVIEWS: *Noveishaya Istoriya Anglii* (V. G. Trukhanovsky); *Torture Trial in Belfast* (John Hostettler); reviewed by Clemens Dutt, D. N. Pritt, Q.C.

FEBRUARY: *Election Prospects* (R.P.D.); *Suicide Club* (Ivor Montagu); *A Memoir of G. D. H. Cole* (R. Page Arnot); *Shop Stewards Today* (Bill Warman); *Convertibility and After* (J. R. Campbell); *Africa Awakened* (W. E. B. Du Bois); *Charles Darwin* (Clemens Dutt); *The Choice for the Sudan* (A. Masri); *Farewell to the Commune* (David Crook).

MARCH: *Thaw or War?* (R.P.D.); *The Tory Offensive*: 1. *What Does Mr. Gaitskell Offer?* (George Matthews); 2. *The Miners Fight Back* (John Wood); 3. *The Right to Work* (H. Howarth); *War Over Berlin?* (Ivor Montagu); *The Twenty-First Congress* (Andrew Rothstein); *I Was There* (Norman Temple). BOOK REVIEWS: *A Painter of Our Time* (John Berger); *Small Farm in the Steppe* (Valentin Katayev); Arnold Kettle, Rosemary Small.

NYASALAND MASSACRE

Hugo Rathbone

AS we write the toll of Africans done to death in Nyasaland has passed the forty mark. Every one of the forty has been killed in our name, though the Government of the Central African Federation is primarily responsible; for Nyasaland along with Northern and Southern Rhodesia make up this Federation. But Nyasaland is at the same time a Protectorate and its people, the Nyasa, are entitled to the 'protection' of the British Government. But instead of protection the bullet is the lot of these 'protected persons'. Behind Sir Robert Armitage, who gives the orders in Nyasaland, and egging him on stands the Federal Prime Minister, Sir Roy Welensky, just this year created by the Queen a K.C.M.G. in the January honours list 'for services rendered'. This shambles has received the full endorsement of our Tory Government.

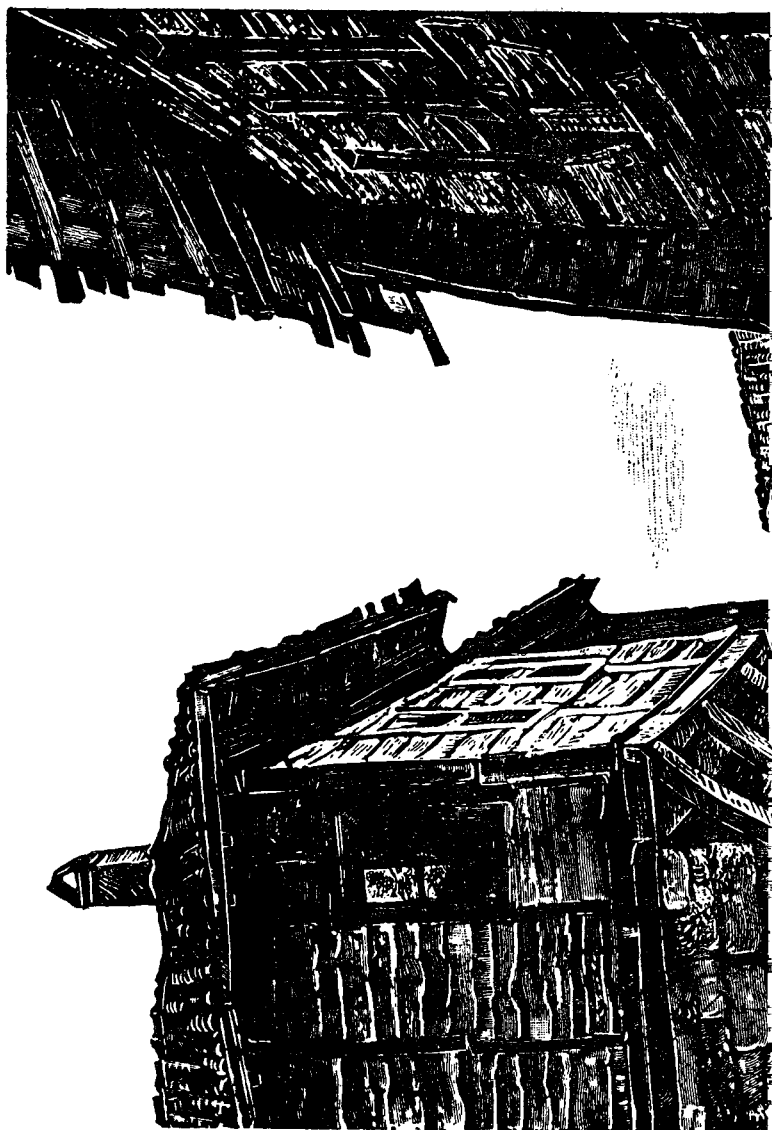
The rapidly moving events started in Southern Rhodesia. Sir Edgar Whitehead, its Prime Minister, on February 26 suddenly declared an emergency, banned the South Rhodesian African National Congress. The Congress offices were raided: a total of 435 Africans were arrested. In his statement the Prime Minister said:

If we only clean up the situation in Southern Rhodesia and nowhere else, there is risk of re-infection. I hope we shall find the other governments follow the example that Southern Rhodesia has set.

This is open provocation to the Nyasaland Government to go over to acts of repression. 'Re-infection'! That is the first example in this disgusting drama of how these European settlers have distorted the English language in their attempts to conceal their real aims. They adopt the term 'Operation Sunrise' to describe the invading troops in Nyasaland to cover the meaning of their acts. For what the S. Rhodesian Government really fears are not the so-called 'horrors' of African nationalism but the possibility that in face of the united demand of the Nyasa people the Nyasaland Government might have been forced to grant them a truly democratic constitution. Any 'infection' of such a democracy would indeed be dangerous for them in the situation in which they have just succeeded in binding the Africans living in the two Rhodesias under fancy franchise constitutions which they hope will effectively ensure the continued domination of settler rule.

Four days later the curtain was lifted on the second act of Federal scheming. Responding to Whitehead's move, the Governor

From BULGARIA





Fishermen of Samokov

Wood-engraving by VASIL ZACHARIEFF

of Nyasaland, Sir Robert Armitage, himself declared an emergency in Nyasaland, giving as his reason for the few days delay that the repressive forces sufficient to clamp down this emergency had only by then been collected from Southern Rhodesia. The African National Congress of Nyasaland was banned and 249 Africans were rounded up and put under arrest. To cap all, when Africans protested against these arrests—'protected persons', mind you—twenty-three of them were straightway shot down.

Then on the stage of this bloodthirsty drama struts that same afternoon of March 3, the Tory Government's Colonial Secretary, the supposed chief Protector of Nyasaland Africans, Lennox Boyd. Yes, he fully endorsed these acts ordered by the Governor. They were carried out, he asserted, to scotch a 'massacre' plan devised by the African Congress to kill off the Europeans, Asians and moderate Africans living in Nyasaland, which he said the Nyasaland Government has just unearthed.

This attempt to foist such a monstrous plot on the Africans was indeed and once again, the very opposite of the truth (namely, that Lennox Boyd had already bound himself to the Federal scheme). *The Observer* in a profile on Dr. Banda on October 8 revealed that the British Government was already committed to supporting the Federal Government in resisting any 'major change' in the new constitution to be framed for Nyasaland.

The Nyasa had already shown themselves united behind the demands of their Congress for universal suffrage and for African majorities in their Legislative and in their Executive Councils with an African Minister to lead them. For only in this way could they carry out their further aim of secession from the Federation and self-government for all the peoples of Nyasaland, Europeans and Asians as well as Africans, within the British Commonwealth, if at all possible. It was obvious the Federal Government had considered that it would be very difficult for the Under-Secretary of the Colonies, Lord Perth, who was due to arrive for consultation on the constitution, totally to resist these demands of the Africans united as the people were behind them. So this monstrous 'massacre plot' was unearthed. In Gold Coast (Ghana) and British Guiana, in similar circumstances, plots were also announced with no shred of evidence for them ever discovered.*

*It had become well known in Nyasaland for weeks before that the Federal and Nyasaland Prime Ministers were working out new repressive measures against the Nyasaland peoples. The ban in November last on all African meetings without prior police permission was regarded as a foretaste of this.

This monstrous 'massacre plot' provided the settlers therefore with the justification they wanted to clap all the Congress leaders in jail and to begin the Long Night of the Machine Gun and Bomb—Operation Sunrise! Then when the dark dead calm of a field of slaughter and imprisoned humanity had been achieved, Lord Perth would return. With the help of what suitable African stooges could still be raked together, he would then agree to a few unreal constitutional concessions. In this way the Nyasalanders would again be bound to the yoke of British settlerdom as their fellows have become in Southern and Northern Rhodesia. Such was the scheme. But the Nyasa are now showing their mettle in ever-increasing resistance. What primarily spurs them on?

For years now Nyasaland has been treated as the labour reservoir of the two Rhodesias. Thousands of Nyasa have been forced to migrate there, primarily to earn money to pay their taxes. In fact more Nyasa work for wages outside than inside Nyasaland—in 1957 170,000 working outside with only 100,000 in Nyasaland itself. Their treatment under the apartheid-like laws and customs of Southern Rhodesia, where most of them go, has contributed very largely to the suspicion and hatred of S. Rhodesian settlerdom that is universal throughout Nyasaland today. A further deep-seated reason for this suspicion is that when Nyasaland became a protectorate in 1891, the people were compelled to permit the occupation of some of their land which had been granted to settlers by the then British Government representative: but the people always regarded this occupied land as rightfully their own and only as leased to the settlers.

The Federation authorities have for long been trying to get the Nyasaland Government to agree to make European agriculture a federal subject. In view of the adamant opposition to such a step from every single section of the Nyasa, chiefs and people alike, the Government has always been compelled to resist this demand. For all the Nyasa are quite certain that once control passes to the Federation, the leases of these settler-occupied lands—mainly tea estates—will by some trick be made irrevocable and the land will permanently pass out of their hands (even if the very passing of the control from a Protectorate bound by treaties to what is an independent 'self-governing colony' does not in itself nullify the leasehold character of the land). The Nyasa, therefore, regarded it as most sinister that Whitehall last September instructed the Nyasaland Government to review the whole question again. Knowing

of the existence of a fresh wave of openly exercised pressure by settlers' agents, they see this move by the British Government as obviously signifying the intention to let the settlers have their way.

Now Nyasaland has always been regarded as a 'poor' country with poor soil and with no minerals to speak of. Today, all sorts of mineral riches have been discovered there.* The 'poor' soil could be made rich again by the development of the 'large' apatite (phosphate) deposits now found. Secondly as the Nyasa themselves know, there are the primary essentials for industrial development—iron and coal—both of high grade (the iron ore of admittedly 60-70 per cent extraction compared with a 30 per cent average for British ore). There is niobium (columbite) and titanium, both essential for high speed flight, not to mention uranium deposits. In fact no less than 38 different minerals are listed in the 1957 Colonial Office Report on Nyasaland as found there—an increase of fourteen by the way on 1955.†

Nyasaland, though now dubbed by the Federation as their poor neighbour, has all the makings of a rich country in the future—provided only that it can govern itself. Conversely one can well imagine how the business tycoons of the Federation with greedy eyes on these potential riches want to retain their hold on Nyasaland—if only to stifle any possible competition with their own rapidly developing industry in Southern Rhodesia, where for instance a new iron steel industry is starting largely under the control of British capital.

What is now being enacted in Central Africa is a reflection of the historical struggles of the British people. The Labour movement remembers the Chartist days when the vote was denied them through force or guile, and the long struggles for education and for all the amenities of life. So it is the same in Central Africa. Fancy franchises in the two Rhodesias designed to disfranchise the vast majority of Africans with a similar scheme the plotters wish to perpetrate in Nyasaland. Little if any education for the mass of the seven millions of Africans there—only 3 per cent get any secondary education at all in Northern Rhodesia—this providing the excuse that Africans are incapable of skilled work, so justifying

*We should say 're-discovered': for just a hundred years ago Livingstone reported iron deposits.

†It is instructive to note that one of the Tory speakers put up on March 3 in the debate on the Nyasaland emergency, Sir Peter Macdonald, displayed such crass ignorance of that country as roundly to declare when speaking of all three territories in the Federation: 'They had great potentialities, but certainly in the case of Nyasaland no minerals'. (*Hansard* Col. 322.)

the industrial colour bar. Finally, it is in Nyasaland where the Congress movement has always been admitted to be the strongest, that there has been the longest delay in considering a new constitution. It was right back in June last when Lennox Boyd received a Nyasa delegation on this subject. Now when the Government can no longer resist the united demands of all the people, monstrous plots are concocted and provocation is used as instanced by the importation of the hated Southern Rhodesian soldiery. This has its parallel with any strike movement here when the workers are called 'trouble makers', 'agitators', 'syndicalists', 'communists', or what have you; or again in the political sphere when in a General Election the 'Zinoviev letter', the post office savings scare, flights from the pound crises have been used to try to prevent the people from voting Labour.

It is indeed, this deep-seated realisation that the same story is now being enacted in Central Africa as has faced the British Labour Movement in all its struggles, that resulted in the widespread protests that arose from all sections of the Labour benches in the two Commons debates on the Nyasaland Emergency and the Stonehouse affair on March 3 and 4. These protests have now spread to further sections of the British people.

But this latest instance of repressive action in British-owned Africa has now to deal with a new factor, absent in previous actions—the growing organised unity of all Africans against colonialism. The All-Africa Conference at Accra last year signified an immense leap forward in this organised unity. Already the permanent body set up by this Conference has sent a strong protest against this repression; it calls upon all political parties, organisations and churches in Africa to demand the lifting of the bans on all African bodies, the release of the arrested Africans and the appointment of an independent commission to investigate the causes of the murders in Nyasaland. Now there comes a protest from the government party in the Eastern Region of Nigeria with its population of over 7½ millions, the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons, against the 'brutal slaughter and unwarranted detention' of Africans in Nyasaland. All Africans throughout the continent are girding up their loins together for this struggle against colonialism. Remembering their past struggles for the elementary democratic rights, British workers can but join in these struggles of the Africans for the right to vote, the right to live and the right to manage their own affairs.

THE DANCE OF FREEDOM

‘Kenya Resident’

ONE February evening, a thousand young Africans were gathered in a big hall near Nairobi. They cannot belong to a Kenya-wide political party, for in the name of freedom of association the still British government of the colony limits their People’s Convention Party to the Nairobi region; and they cannot at present hold a political meeting at all, for in the name of freedom of speech,* and in special honour of the visit to the colony of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, all meetings in the region were banned. But dances are not banned!

They danced. They danced some African dances, some European dances and some dances composed from the best dance traditions of both continents. And then came a special dance; a troupe of Kikuyus in one of their traditional dances, graceful, slow, rhythmical, insistent. They wore their traditional costumes, gay, picturesque, feathered and carried the traditional blue and white paint on their faces. Town-dwellers they may be now; but they have not forgotten the dances, the dress, the songs, and the rhythms of their villages. There are many things they have not forgotten.

And, as they danced, they sang. Old tunes and not so old words. They sang of Jomo Kenyatta; his name came through in the rhythm. In the six years since this venerated Kikuyu leader of the Kenya African people, the head of their great and now proscribed political organisation, the Kenya African Union, was sent to prison, the British Government of Kenya has done all it can to make the people forget Kenyatta; even when questions have been publicly raised in the Legislative Council about the treatment of Kenyatta and his colleagues in their prison nearly 700 miles away on the borders of the Sudan, the Government has studiously avoided the use of their names. It would, if it could, blot out all memory of Kenyatta from the public mind, as the American government sought to do with the memory of Paul Robeson. So, how did the new young generation at this dance hall react when the old name came to their ears in the song? Had they forgotten him? Or was the name just an old memory to them? Or is it still a living burning symbol of struggle and hope?

*So, also, for a number of years *Labour Monthly* has been banned in the colony. It would be an offence for me to bring this, my own article, over the border into the colony.

The answer did not tarry. The moment the name was heard, it meant as much to them as it would have done ten years ago. The men burst out clapping; and the women 'trilled' that high-pitched emotion-stirring musical note that Kikuyu women use to express joy or approval. The sounds grew, and there came swelling the cries of 'Freedom! Freedom!' That lovely, compelling, world-transforming word and conception and reality, that in our short life-time has inspired and created so many new homelands.

The party was naturally nearly all African; but there was one middle-aged Indian present who offered to sing a song of his own composition. The chairman seemed a little anxious, for extempore additions to programmes may not succeed; but he knew him for a genuine friend, so he gave him the platform. He sang, and sang well, a simple moving song about their beloved leader. When this name came in the words of the song the audience, reacting readily to the name instead of attending to the importance of the song's rhythm, broke swiftly into long applause. But they were gently chided by the chairman, and thereafter remained as good as gold while the old but still tuneful voice from another continent sang a long song of praise and then their cheers were unrestrained.

Why does Kenyatta's name come forward with special insistence just at this moment? Well, the principal witness who gave evidence against Kenyatta on his trial six years ago recently swore an affidavit to the effect that, when he accused Kenyatta of Mau Mau associations, he was lying. And so he was prosecuted by the British Kenya government, the government that prosecuted Kenyatta and called this man as a witness—prosecuted not for the perjury that he confesses to having committed in 1952, but for now swearing an oath that he did then commit perjury. And in this new trial Kenyatta, the man that the government sought in vain to make people forget, was summoned as a witness to help in proving the falsity of the 1952 story.

In the dance hall the new generation, its faith as clear and superb as its traditional dancing, its understanding as true as its unbreakable longing for freedom and justice, reacted spontaneously to the name of the unforgotten, the unforgettable, the beloved leader. Fired by his name, in his and its tradition, with his example, under its new leaders, it seeks freedom and ensues it.

At last they all, Africans, Indians, Europeans, streamed out into the swift refreshing tropical twilight, minds at one in understanding that, after the night, comes the glorious dawn of freedom.

72 . . . 81 . . .

If you were eleven-plus, you would be asked to continue numbering in sequence. There is, however, rather more intelligence in our numbers than in the school tests.

72 years has Alex McDonald, a stalwart of stalwarts in the working class movement. His was the first 'promise to help in the circulation campaign' form we received. He pledged six new readers before March was out. The next day he phoned to say cancel that (dismay in the office) as—he had already got four! One was a busman who thought he could sell six more in his garage, so cross out the six and make it twelve (jubilation in the office).

81 was the result of us taking our own advice and using particular articles to approach those with special interests. This was the number of L.M. with John Wood's 'How the Miners Fight Back' article which were sold to Scottish miners lobbying in London against the pit closures.

Frank McKenna is taking 18 copies of this issue to sell to railwaymen. We feel sure that others would find a ready sale for his fine article in depots and loco. sheds. Similarly the good words of George Alsop can be spread amongst miner workers. And many an argument about Russian reading habits could be clinched by Judah Waten's facts.

Sending 10s. for the fund in memory of Fred Leach, Jud Cohen of Salford pledges to win another reader in his place and to discuss with his Communist Party branch selective canvassing for further readers. And may we add another suggestion, operated by one Communist Party District, of introducing L.M. to each new recruit. A good idea for new Labour Party members too! They would find much of value to help them on their way in 'Communism and the Left'.

For all prepared to make special efforts, arrangements can be made to supply copies on credit. The examples we have given are a splendid beginning which should inspire many more to help in our campaign. Please complete the form which we have put this time on the back cover so that when you cut it out it will not mutilate your copy.

YOUTH IN ENGINEERING

John R. Foster*

TODAY there exist tragic and unmistakable signs of the difficulties confronting young people, however good they have been at school, whatever indication they give of ability. January 12, 1959, shows 45,748 young people under eighteen were unemployed nationally. Throughout the south east, Youth Employment Committees are finding it extremely difficult, in some cases impossible, to place young lads in engineering. In the highly concentrated engineering areas, for example, of Surrey, employing over 50,000 engineering workers, vacancies filled by boys through the Youth Employment Service fell from 1,860 in 1953 to 1,347 in 1957. This, when the total number of school-leavers which includes the host of fifteen-year-olds will increase by approximately 100 per cent by 1962. Throughout the country, there is increasing difficulty in placing such young people in any jobs, let alone in skilled trades.

Unemployment at sixteen years of age can mean deprivation of skill for a life-time.

In 1957, some 37,260 school-leavers entered the engineering, ship and electrical goods industries, 24,458 for skilled training. Training is inadequate, wages are poor. Even this Tory Government recognises that, to hold its own in the highly mechanised industries of the future, more highly skilled craftsmen, technicians and scientists will be needed. Yet very little is contained within the Government's education programme for any radical changes.

Out of 17 basic industries, engineering has the lowest wages for young people, the present disgraceful rates being:—

Age 15	...	48/6½	per 44 hours
„ 16	...	59/0½	„
„ 17	...	69/6	„
„ 18	...	94/4	„
„ 19	...	110/6½	„
„ 20	...	130/6½	„

These rates bear no relation to the needs of modern industry; they are no fair reward for the efforts of the lads in learning their craft; they mean that especially the older lads are used as cheap labour. Many parents must subsidise their apprentice sons. Apprentices either have their training interrupted by the call-up,

*Well-known engineers' leader in the Home Counties, Mr. Foster, as the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions representative, is joint secretary for the London Joint Panel of the Local Training Committees in the Greater London Area.

or must do military service when they should be starting their first years as craftsmen.

Young people want to get on. They want to learn a trade; they want opportunity and a status in society. And young engineering workers certainly have shown readiness to fight for what they want.

Until 1937 there was no recognised wage structure or procedure at all for youth in engineering, but nation-wide strike action by the young lads themselves forced the employers to recognise them and the Negotiating Procedure for boys and youths was signed, together with a wage structure which yielded at age 14, 2d. for each 1s. applied to adults, up to 6d. at age 20. Thereafter, changes in the percentage of the adult rate came as a result of action by the young engineers. In 1942 a scale was achieved ranging from 15 per cent at the age of 14 to 60 per cent at the age of 20. In 1943 $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent was added to the percentage basis; further action in 1952 resulted in an additional flat sum. Some 30,000 apprentices came out that year, and stayed out, for three and a half weeks. The structure remains the same today.

The readiness of young engineers for organised action and unity with the older workers has been demonstrated time and again; in 1937 with the demand that shop stewards be allowed to negotiate for them; from the 1941 strike particularly, the Amalgamated Engineering Union Junior Workers Committees grew in strength. In many areas apprentices stood side by side with the adults in the recent engineering stoppages. The Annual Youth Conference of the A.E.U. demonstrates year after year, with ever changing delegates, vigour and readiness for struggle, with resolutions for wage increases and action to get them and for improved training.

In face of the Tory offensive it is now more than ever an urgent need to win for the unions the thousands of lads in engineering who remain unorganised and to harness the full strength and militant spirit of the youth in defence of jobs, living standards and working conditions. Some apprentices are hoodwinked into believing that their indentures prevent them from joining a trade union. Unfortunately many parents compel their sons to observe the system. (In face of the resolute determination of thousands of apprentices in the strikes of the past, the employers' threats to cancel indentures were given a very hollow ring.) Many adult craftsmen and others tend to be content to leave the problem of organisation and Socialist education until 'they come out of their time'. Keeping young people away from organised action can only be harmful; it weakens the

efforts for improved conditions now and the young worker turned aside from taking part in workshop struggle today may become the non-unionist of tomorrow.

The Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions is acting for young workers and striving for opportunities in craft training, improved wages, reduced hours and extended leisure. It can record a significant advance in the Agreement of 1947 for the 'Recruitment and Training of Juveniles for the Engineering Industry'. This introduced joint machinery throughout the country, known as Local Training Committees, wherein the trade unions, employers and Youth Employment Service endeavour to carry out the terms of reference outlined in the title. But twelve years' experience of these Committees indicates the dominating role of the employers with emphasis on 'recruitment' to the detriment of 'training'. Recruitment by careful selection for administrative and technical posts leaves a vast number of 'cast offs' to fend for themselves on training. Yet a revolutionary step was taken insofar as the Agreement provides for one day per week release with pay for technical studies up to the age of 18, an opportunity that many working class lads seized upon.*

The unions recognise that the scandalous wages paid to youth must be improved, but the claim presented in 1956 for 52½ per cent at the age of 15 and up to 90 per cent at 20 was rejected in February, 1958. It took the employers *two years* to reply. They even had the audacity to argue in rejecting the youth claim that the export markets had to be competed for. So the young people are to pay for low tenders in international markets, in spite of unprecedented profits in the industry.

The lesson has been learned, that negotiations in a vacuum and without active support must inevitably fail, leading to a decision by the Confederation Executive Council in February, 1958:

That District Committees be encouraged to convene meetings of apprentices, boys and youth, to acquaint them of the facts in relation to their claim, and that the attention of Shop Steward representatives in the Districts be directed to the need for the further recruitment of Junior Workers and also the need to intensify interest and support for the claim which had been presented on their behalf.

*Recruitment and Training of Juveniles for the Engineering Industry Agreement, April, 1947.

4. The National Joint Body will lay down from time to time minimum standards relating to the employment and training of the juvenile workers in the industry, and will seek the adoption of such standards through existing machinery for industrial negotiation.
5. The industry will use its best endeavours to secure compliance with the agreed standards by all federated firms. . . .
6. The local Training Committees will keep in close touch with all firms employing apprentices and boys in order to ensure that the agreed conditions are complied with.
11. . . . give especial consideration to the selection and training of young workers in the industry who are not apprenticed. . . .

Of 48 Confederation District Committees, 12 have held such mass meetings. The one in London, covering a radius of 18 miles from Charing Cross was held in the T.U.C. Headquarters on July 1, 1958, when tremendous support and the natural fervour of the young people was made abundantly clear—so there are signs! Such is the feeling in the London area that a further mass meeting of young engineers was held in February of this year in the same important headquarters of the British trade union movement.

Therefore negotiations must be re-opened on this vital youth wage claim. Consideration should be given to continued full time education at technical colleges for youngsters unable to find a job. All employers should institute and operate proper training for *all* youth.

At this moment signs of industrial movement amongst youth are limited, but given this lead it is clear young engineers are ready for action. Those already organised respect, understand and appreciate the rich traditions of struggle of the trade unions; they are conscious of the need for radical changes in leadership and opportunity to express their own views and aims.

The young people of today will assuredly take their place in the ranks.

'It is a sacred task. GO FORTH AND ACHIEVE.'

—Tom Mann.

With the care, attention and experience of the trade union movement behind them, the young workers, who in growing numbers are also engaged in the struggle for peace, can win the future they desire and to which they are entitled.

LABOUR MONTHLY

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

MIGRATE ! — BUT WHERE ?

Migration is the solution of the capitalists for the youth of the derelict depressed areas. In a report of the South Wales Educational Authorities for 1931, characteristic of the 'advice' in most areas, migration is advised. They say :

We regret it is necessary but we see no other course if the youth of South Wales is to earn a livelihood.

But where can they migrate? Every industry is practically the same—no hope, no advancement. Migrate to Lancashire where one piecer in 40 can become a spinner, to Scotland where skilled miners and shipbuilders are idle for years? To London with its tremendous juvenile unemployment, its sweated hells and blind alley occupations?

(From *The Congress of Action and Youth in Industry* by John Gollan, April, 1934.)

SHORTER HOURS AND THE CRISIS

T. F. McWhinnie

WITH more than 620,000 arguments in favour of the 40-hour week, the heavy brains of the Industrial Disputes Tribunal could not find a single argument to support even a phased reduction over three years!

After cogitating for nearly a month while jobs were being lost at the rate of almost 3,000 a day, the best verdict they could come up with was a draw—which leaves the employers as champion, thank you. It also leaves them free to pursue their happy round of dismissals and the reduction of their labour costs. It means that unemployment will rise still further, that the pressure on wages will grow and that claims for increases will be refused much more readily. The aim of the Government, of the Cohen Committee and of the Federation of British Industries is nearer realisation. The famous pool of unemployment is spreading, with the employed workers in many cases themselves carrying the burden of keeping the unemployed.

It is now twelve years since we had any reduction in the working week (from 48 to 44), yet during that time production has risen by 51 per cent and productivity by 38 per cent with a rise of manpower in civil employment of only 9 per cent. But, the employers argue, a reduction in the working week to 40 hours would not mean a fall in actual hours worked. It would only be a disguised wage increase, since those working overtime would continue to do so, with the difference that they would be paid overtime from the 40th hour. The short answer to that one is 'So what!'. Basic wage rates are nothing less than scandalous today, their buying power in most cases being no higher (and in some cases lower) than it was in 1939. Only bonus, overtime, or piece-work bring most wages to anything like a reasonable level. If a 40-hour week would raise the earnings of the 1,364,300 out of 5,640,000 employed in manufacturing who are doing an average of 7½ hours overtime per week (November, 1958, figures), are we supposed to be ashamed or hurry away from the prospect? And, after all, if the bosses need a minority to work overtime (and they are the ones who decide) why should they not pay for it?

But the 40-hour week is not being claimed simply in order to

maintain or improve the present earnings of those working overtime.

Forty hours a week is enough for any man or woman to work in these days. The function of the trade union movement goes wider than a purely defensive struggle to see that working class standards are not whittled away. There should be no apology for saying at the top of our voices that we want more of the good things, as of right: more wages, yes, but more leisure to enjoy them, and more time out of sight of the factories and mills. It is important to say this and to say it with confidence and firmness.

But there is another, wider aspect, of the fight for the 40-hour week, going beyond the one of a four-hour reduction in working time. It is this. If the employers succeed in maintaining basic hours at 44 and the depression deepens, then they will have won a very important point. A depression, apart from wiping out many of the small men, permits the big firms, and particularly the monopolies, to reorganise their business, re-tool, cut labour costs and keep going with less labour.

This tendency will be even more violent in any present-day depression due to the availability of automatic devices. Thus, if the recession is here to stay, and becomes worse, the employers hope to reorganise industry on the basis of the 44-hour week and not on the foundation of a shorter working week, which would mean keeping on that many more men. A 40-hour week would limit to some degree their opportunities for sloughing off labour, keeping their productivity rising and their profit-rate stable.

For the working class the fight for the 40-hour week is now the key to the fight for jobs.

The clearest indications of what is in store for the British working class naturally come from the capitalist country where the depression is deepest and industry most highly modernised and automated. Today, unemployment officially stands at 4,724,000 in the U.S.A.—a rise in the month of January alone of 600,000—in addition to which 1,267,000 persons disappeared from the working force. Yet, at the same time, U.S. production has increased over the past year by 6 per cent, and is almost back to the pre-depression level of the summer of 1957. Mr. J. S. Parker, Vice-president of the General Electric Company has stated:

We see business picking up pretty generally, but through economies we have made, our employment level will not get back as high as it was at the peak.

This is confirmed by an estimate made by Dr. William Haber of the University of Michigan, an expert on unemployment. He states that even if the U.S. depression were to end there would still be, in Michigan (the automobile area), about 175,000 who would never work again. In a letter sent to all members of the U.S. Congress, the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America underlined what is happening with the following quotation from *Business Week*:

Rising productivity is having a two-fold impact on the economy, it's reducing labour costs and, with companies doing a bigger volume of business, is already boosting profits. It's slowing the re-hiring of laid-off workers, creating fewer job openings for new entrants to the labour force, and keeping unemployment at higher levels than during earlier post-war recoveries.

The *Wall Street Journal* puts it this way:

New plants pay off in soaring output with less manpower. Today's 11.9 million workers turn out 35 per cent more than 12.7 million did in 1948.

And the *New York Herald Tribune* says:

About six hundred thousand jobs disappeared during the 1953-54 recession and another one million are due to vanish during the current downturn. That means that almost one out of every seven factory production workers will have been chopped from the country's pay-roll.

Do not let us delude ourselves that this applies to the U.S.A. only. One recent British example comes from the *Manchester Guardian* of February 20, which reports that the Secretary of the Hinckley district of the National Union of Hosiery Workers in calling for a shorter working week said that 'knitters were operating more machines and production would be increased in some factories by between 25 and 50 per cent as a result of innovations'. Redundancy was likely to result on 'a massive scale'.

There may have been a *better* time to fight for the 40-hour week in British industry, but there has never been a more *necessary* moment. An aroused and mobilised rank and file can win it.

WHAT SOVIET PEOPLE READ

Judah Waten

[The author was elected by the Fellowships of Australian Writers to go on a recent delegation to the Soviet Union. His two fellow delegates were Professor Manning Clark (Professor of History, Canberra University) and James Devaney, poet and critic.—Ed., L.M.]

THE cultural and educational level of the Soviet citizen is extraordinarily high. Never was there a society where reading and study were so universal. Free education has resulted in the Soviet Union producing a higher percentage of secondary school graduates and university students than anywhere else in the world.

From my own experience I did not meet an adult Soviet citizen who had not read Dickens, Burns, Zola, Whitman, Rolland, Jack London and Mark Twain, let alone the classical Russian writers and many modern and foreign writers. The one-time differences between intellectuals and workers have narrowed very considerably: with the new educational reforms they will almost disappear. In short, the average Soviet citizen is a well-read, cultured person. Consequently, he knows a great deal about his own country and the rest of the socialist world. But he also knows much about the West—ininitely more than the average citizen in the Western world knows about the Soviet Union. He gets much of his knowledge from reading contemporary Western writers—including Australian. The best known English and American writers like Graham Greene, William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway and John Steinbeck are published in the hundreds of thousands; American writers have been put out in 50 languages of the Union in a total of more than 82 million copies. The 'Angry Young Men' are being published in sizeable editions. No Western writer, unless his work is deliberately designed to inflame hatred against the Soviet Union or advocates war, will fail sooner or later to be published if his work is of more than local interest and has some literary merit. The tale that the Soviet citizen knows nothing about the West is just so much tosh like most of the stories told about the U.S.S.R.

What a different world it would be if a comparable number of Soviet writers were read in U.S.A. and Great Britain!

The study of English and American literature begins in the schools. I visited an average 10-year school in a once slum area

and found the boys and girls were familiar with Swift, Defoe, Dickens, Walter Scott, Fenimore Cooper, Thackeray, Twain and many other famous English and American writers, like Washington Irving who is now rarely read in the British speaking world.

Culture, particularly the fine arts, music and literature, was in Tsarist society, as in all capitalist countries, beyond the reach of the people. Its fruits were only available to the select few, the rich and sections of the intelligentsia. Now in the Soviet Union culture and the people have merged into one. In Moscow I recalled Lenin's words at the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets in 1918:

Formerly all human knowledge, all human talent laboured only in order to provide some with the benefits of technique and culture and, on the other hand, to deprive the others of those things which were most essential—education and self development. But now all the marvels of technique, all the achievements of culture, will become the general property of the whole people, and, from now on, human intelligence and human talent will never again be converted into a means of oppression, a means of exploitation. We know this. Can we then deny that this mighty historical task is worth working for, worth devoting the whole of our strength to? And the toilers will accomplish this gigantic historical labour, for in them lie latent the great forces of revolution, renaissance and regeneration.

This 'gigantic historical labour' has been accomplished in forty-one years, out of which nearly twenty years were taken up with terrible wars, with the worst ordeals any new social order ever experienced.

I was also impressed by the variety of literature in the Soviet Union. One has only to read the novelists and short story writers like Sholokhov, Fedin, Leonov, Granin, Kaverin, Kataev, Ehrenburg, Yashin, Antonov, V. Nekrassov, Nikolayeva among many others to realise how richly varied Soviet prose is. Then there are all the different and many gifted poets like Tvardovsky, Simonov, Tichonov, Antokolsky, Isakovsky, Martinov, Surkov, Vera Inber, Olga Bergholtz who are read in the hundreds of thousands of copies; poetry readings in the Soviet Union are almost as popular as the ballet. Similarly in the theatre there is great variety, including many modern comedies and satires. There is an increasing number of writers from the different Republics and regions. In the Maxim Gorki Institute I listened to a poem recited by the author who came from a part of North Siberia where less than twenty-five years ago there was no written language. And reference must be made to the colourful, educational and ever growing children's literature to which many eminent Soviet authors

contribute. I believe they are among the best in the world; even in translation they are very effective.

The Soviet reader is a most exacting person. He demands the highest artistic standards. In Moscow a watchmaker said to me, 'It's not just books we readers want from authors, we want good books'. Then he defined a good book; it was a definition he had read. 'A good book is one in which life throbs between the covers like blood under the skin.' He added: 'A good book is one you can remember for always, like Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*'. This man in fact defined the contemporary Soviet reader's attitude. Most of the people I met in Moscow and Leningrad had something interesting to say about books and writers, both Russian and foreign. For instance a student in Moscow talking about our famous short story writer Alan Marshall, whose stories appear in the two Russian anthologies of Australian stories, said: 'I like Alan Marshall because he shows a great love for every living thing—from a blade of grass to a human being'. A plasterer said to me: 'Katharine Susannah Prichard is such a remarkable descriptive writer. She makes Australia very vivid to me'.

This understanding of literature is really not to be wondered at. The Soviet reader has been brought up on the best books in the world treasury of literature. The Soviet citizen is so fond of literature that he must also read about it. Not only are critical books bought up in great numbers but there are three literary newspapers published every second day in Moscow alone—*The Literary Gazette*, *Literature and Life* and *Soviet Culture*, apart from innumerable weekly and monthly literary journals. Consequently the Soviet reader will no longer accept poor writing, schematic novels with lifeless characters and fake situations. Of course there are still some of these books published. Probably there never will be a time when only good books will be issued. But the number of poor novels is decreasing. The novelist has been set very big tasks by the Soviet reader who is still ahead of the writer. However, some of the latest work by writers like Granin, Nekrassov and Antonov show the progress made in recent times.

Is the writer free in the Soviet Union? This question must be answered, although the Western press which persistently raises this denies publication to anyone who refuses to conform to its views.

I am satisfied that the Soviet writer is far better off than his counterpart in, say, Great Britain or the U.S.A., who apart from the best seller writer, cannot live by literature. Even a modest Soviet

writer enjoys a security and prestige which few Western writers can hope to attain. When he is not drawing royalties he can get a grant from the Literary Fund the equivalent of a living wage, besides free medicine and accommodation for a small rental. Never in history has the writer been as free to create art, to write without consideration of a 'market' as he is today in the Soviet Union.

His subjects are not dictated to him. Unlike the writer in the West, particularly the U.S.A., he does not have to write to a pattern if he is to succeed. All that is expected of the writer in the Soviet Union is that he should write truthfully, significantly and with art, of the life he knows best, about those things which move him most deeply. In the words of Leo Tolstoy:

A person should write . . . only when the thing he has to say is so persistent that he cannot get rid of it until he gives expression to it. Any other reason for writing (ambition, or, even worse, repulsive monetary reasons) even if they are linked with the main reason, the need for self-expression, can only mar the sincerity and merit of the writing.

There is no lack of a critical approach to life in Soviet literature. Apart from Ehrenburg's *The Thaw* and Dudintsev's *Not By Bread Alone*, I know novels and stories by Granin, Kaverin, Nikolayeva and Yashin which are just as critical but of much higher literary merit. There can be no literature without criticism and conflict—a view which is largely accepted among writers and readers in the Soviet Union. And there is no uniformity of literary opinion in the publishing houses, the Writers Union or in the literary institutes I visited. On the contrary I frequently heard and, indeed, took part in many arguments about books and writers.

Of course not every novel that is written in the Soviet Union is necessarily published. Boris Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago*, for instance, was rejected on the grounds that it was a bad novel, a poorly written caricature. It is not unusual in the U.S.A., Britain or France for novels by even eminent authors to be rejected by publishers. Publishers have that right everywhere and it has never been challenged. Nor can it be. Thus no comment was aroused when Faber and Faber on the advice of T. S. Eliot turned down a book by Robert Graves; and when Angus and Robertson rejected a novel written by one of Australia's most famous novelists.

I feel nothing would have been heard of it had it not been an anti-Communist novel written by a Soviet citizen. The Soviet Editors' view has been echoed by many critics in the West. Orville Prescott said in *The New York Times*:

If it were written by a Russian emigre, or by an American or English

author who had done a lot of conscientious research, *Doctor Zhivago* would be unlikely to cause much stir.

Dulles himself assumed the role of literary critic to comment. Needless to say, his views are fully supported by the former colleagues of Goebbels who run the West German press; and by the French writers Malraux and Camus (another State Department Nobel prize winner), both fresh from helping de Gaulle to power.

The Soviet Editors would, I believe, have been justified in rejecting *Dr. Zhivago* on the same grounds that most British publishers are refusing to publish *Lolita*, the second best seller in U.S.A., second only to *Dr. Zhivago*, the most diabolically pornographic book written by a Russian emigré living in the U.S.A. I do not think it is a denial of freedom to refuse publication to those writing what is, in effect, cold war propaganda for the American Government and to those writing pornography. It is in U.S.A. and even in Britain that writers who advocate the cessation of the cold war and friendlier relations between nations are penalised. Take this example from England. I quote from a letter which appeared in a small English journal written by Douglas Goldring, a letter which the *New Statesman* refused to publish:

The Korean war . . . was the signal for the outbreak in literary London of the British equivalent of McCarthyism. . . . Among a number of disagreeable incidents I was libelled by a veteran novelist, who charged me . . . with writing under Moscow influences. In those days no more damaging accusation could have been made.

And damaged he was. By the time he published his book he writes:

The Press boycott was almost complete. The sales were under 500 copies and a literary career of half a century thus came to an abrupt full stop.

He concludes:

The trifling inconveniences referred to above were, of course, nothing to the persecution endured by progressive writers in the U.S.A. and elsewhere.

But Pasternak has not been penalised materially; he lives comfortably from his translations of Shakespeare and Schiller.

Every Soviet writer I met was passionately devoted to peace and was an enemy of fascism. The bitter experience of pre-war years clearly showed that the path of anti-Communism leads to fascism and war. In our time that path still leads to fascism and war. Many Soviet writers expressed the view that for a Soviet citizen, particularly a writer of the eminence of Pasternak, to contribute to cold war propaganda was contemptible, far worse than the obscenities of the author of *Lolita*.

BOOKS

The Brave New World.

Helen and Scott Nearing.

Social Science Institute, Maine.

248 pp. \$3.50.

SOME months ago I reviewed a book by Helen and Scott Nearing, *Socialists Around the World*. I described it as a 'catalogue of misery'. It was a picture of pessimism and frustration which they found prevalent amongst social democrats throughout Europe. Now here is a different book by the same authors, a book that is a real pleasure to read. A joyful book of buoyant youth, such a contrast to their former book and an even greater and oh, so much happier book than the morbid moanings of Aldous Huxley with his dread of the 'the brave new world'. I have known the Nearings for many years, through their writings, as courageous and devoted socialists. Working on their small farm, Spring, Summer and Autumn, they spend the winter months touring and lecturing in the States or going on fact-finding visits to other lands and, of course carrying the gospel of socialism with them wherever they might go. A grand couple. May they live long and write and lecture for many years to come.

Having received passport endorsement for the Soviet Union and China, they set off in the winter of 1957-58, for these great countries. While they touch on industrialisation and in particular as regards China, rectification, their special interest was education and health. Follow them in the tour and the studies they made and you will find the most valuable understanding of the really tremendous educational and health activities being carried through in both countries. In the introduction they make it clear that, unlike an

American liberal whom they quote, they did not go to the Soviet Union or China expecting to see them building according to the Western pattern. They make the very wise remark that this lad, and others like him, 'overlooked the obvious fact that the builders of socialism in the Soviet Union were not aiming to please the United States liberals'. That is what Shakespeare would have called 'a palpable hit'. They went to see a country that had to be built up from the ruins of Czarism, and then once again, from the ruins of the Nazi invasion. What they saw was an inspiration to them. They saw, as the first section of their book starts off with, 'A New World in the Making'. They end their introduction with this splendid 'confession of Faith': 'We thank our lucky stars for the chance to visit this New World and we eagerly accept this and every other opportunity to bring to the attention of our fellow citizens some of the more important among its aspects and activities'.

And they certainly do a great job in that connection. I could quote passage after passage to show how earnestly they set about their task of getting to know just what was taking place, the care of the young, the wide range of education in town and countryside, the advance of technical and scientific institutions and all the time health and culture and a rising standard of living keeping pace with the phenomenal industrial development. But I will only give one short quotation and, in itself, it sums up the vital, all-important difference between bourgeois society and proletarian. In this country first place goes to the monarchy and the Establishment, princes, princesses, dukes and duchesses, lords, and ladies—parasites all. In the States, multi-millionaires

and film stars come first, they squander wealth in the most profligate manner while children 'cry for bread'. But in the Soviet Union and China, from the first days of their respective revolutions, it has been—first care for the children. So, our travellers, with warm hearts, seeing eyes and receptive minds can say, and I hope that many will read what leads up to it, and what follows: 'We began this report with a comment on the importance which socialists attach to the education and upbringing of their children, and gave some illustrations, drawn from our experience with the children of the Soviet Union. The Chinese people feel an equal pride and have equal hopes for their children. Until we visited China we felt that the children we had met in Soviet Russia, taken as a whole, were the healthiest and best-balanced, pleasantest children we had seen anywhere. We now feel that the Chinese young people are at least the equal of the Russians in robust, sturdy, well-developed bodies and balanced minds. Outside of these two countries we have never seen young people, from babies up, who radiate such hope, such confidence, purpose, self-possession and cheer, Chinese and Russian youth are climbing fast and far'.

WILLIAM GALLACHER.

Anglo-Soviet Journal, Vol. XIX.
S.C.R. Quarterly, 2s. 6d.

WHEN a group of eminent dons recently exhorted *The Times* readers to study Soviet methods of teaching English, the folly of further impeding cultural exchanges became absurdly apparent. The point is underlined by articles in the past four issues of the *Anglo-Soviet Journal*, which for 19 years now has been storming the obstacles to closer cul-

tural relations. In 'Forgotten Pages of English Poetry', A. Nikilyukin reminds us of the poetry of the Corresponding Societies in the 1790's, while in another issue N. Minkh offers some stimulating 'Thoughts on Jazz' (an incontestably post-Dickensian topic, Mr. Prime Minister). Apart from these engaging opportunities 'to see ourselves as others see us', the main merit of the *Journal* remains its picture of the Soviet scene. Contributors in the past period include Russians as distinguished as the composer Shostakovich and film producer Grigori Alexandrov, as well as a host of authoritative British writers whose view is not coloured by cold-war spectacles. The serious thought given to cultural questions in the Soviet Union attracts notice in the general British Press only when, as recently, Pasternak is criticised by the editors of *Novy Mir*. But the *Anglo-Soviet Journal*, now incorporating *The Arts in the U.S.S.R.*, consistently provides a concise quarterly review of events and controversy that is unrivalled by any other English-language publication. It is all the more needed when Tory 'freedom' has succeeded in reducing the number of students taking advanced level G.C.E. Russian from 249 in 1955 to only 62 in 1957. These back numbers do not date.

PETER TEMPEST.

Jim Crow Guide to the U.S.A.

Stetson Kennedy

Lawrence & Wishart. 230pp. 18s.

A DEVASTATING exposure of the daily humiliations, restrictions and assaults suffered by American Negroes, Indians, Puerto Ricans and others. Though the chapter arrangement of this guide enables one to follow it without difficulty, an Index would no doubt have been useful.

J.W.

Blow You Jack, We Were Right!*B.O.A.C. Shop Stewards.* 14 pp. 6d.

THIS neat turn of a colloquialism is the title of a pamphlet published by the Joint Shop Stewards' Committee, B.O.A.C., London Airport. It is the answer of the London Airport workers to the recent report of the Government Court of Enquiry which was set up to probe into the causes of the B.O.A.C. dispute which took place last October. That Court, under the chairmanship of Professor D. T. Jack, C.B.E., J.P., issued a report of a most biased character against trade union organisation at the airport and which, of course, received extensive publicity in the daily Press. We now have, in this well-reasoned, illustrated pamphlet, a very effective reply to that 'Jack report'. It shows how the evidence of reliable trade union officials and leading shop stewards which indicated that the guilty party causing the dispute was the B.O.A.C. management, was either distorted or ignored in the findings of the Court of Enquiry. It gives a very clear account of the events leading to the strike which closed down B.O.A.C. for ten days. It also shows how the policy of this Tory government has been to undermine the structure of nationalisation by handing over to private airline companies the more profitable services operated by the nationalised airlines. The 'Jack report' has encouraged the management to try to break up the shop stewards organisation at the airport. Says the pamphlet: 'Provocation follows provocation. Long established customs and local agreements with regard to meetings have been shamelessly torn up'. Well, unless that policy ceases, we are likely to see another stoppage of work at B.O.A.C.

WAL HANNINGTON.

History Unearthed

Sir Leonard Woolley

Ernest Benn. 184 pp. 30s.

THIS beautiful book has a selection of as many photographs as it has pages to make a survey of eighteen archaeological sites throughout the world. Its author, renowned for his unearthing of Ur of the Chaldees, sometimes shows a naïveté which may be ascribed to his Victorian education.

Thus he is quite uncritical of Evans whose hoarding of the Knossos tablets (deciphered by the genius of Ventris after the death of Evans and others had made them at last available to all the talents) and false theories about them had hindered the spread of knowledge.

Nor should there, in contrast to the richness of the photographs, be so meagre a map of 'Chinese Turkestan,' which in any case is not all 'an unrelieved waste of gravel and shifting sand-dunes' but contains the Tien Shan or Celestial Mountains, in high sufficient relief.

Nor ought the extensive thefts from the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas by Aurel Stein over fifty years ago be treated as in no way reprehensible but simply as 'an unparalleled archaeological "scoop"'. The twenty-four cases of M.S.S. stolen by Stein and received by the British Museum may one day be followed by a hue-and-cry from the Chinese people: in which event no doubt the B.M. trustees, who have shown a keen eye to the main chance in their anxiety to get a whack of the Bernard Shaw fortune, will gracefully pay the worth of these treasures—or hand them back.

Lastly, Sutton Hoo is not in Sussex but in Suffolk. These and such-like blemishes apart, this is a good book, and finely produced.

R. P. ARNOT.

MARX ON LINCOLN

It is not our part to call words of sorrow and horror, while the heart of two worlds heaves with emotion. Even the sycophants who, year after year, and day after day, stuck to their Sisyphus work of morally assassinating Abraham Lincoln and the great republic he headed stand now aghast at this universal outburst of popular feeling, and rival with each other to strew rhetorical flowers on his open grave. They have now at last found out that he was a man neither to be browbeaten by adversity, nor intoxicated by success, inflexibly pressing on to his great goal, never compromising it by blind haste, slowly maturing his steps, never retracing them, carried away by no surge of popular favour, disheartened by no slackening of the popular pulse; tempering stern acts by the gleams of a kind heart, illuminating scenes dark with passion by the smile of humour, doing his titanic work as humbly and homely as heaven-born rulers do little things with the grandiloquence of pomp and state; in one word, one of the rare men who succeed in becoming great, without ceasing to be good. Such, indeed, was the modesty of this great and good man, that the world only discovered him a hero after he had fallen a martyr.

(Karl Marx in a message to the Central Council of the International Workingmen's Association, on Lincoln's death.)

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

BOOKS

- The Hussite Movement in Bohemia. Josef Macek. Orbis, Prague. 138 pp.
 Stories of the Long March. Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1958. 138 pp.
 Tilewright's Acre. Frederick Harper. Lawrence & Wishart. 279 pp. 15s.
 Probleme des Kapitalistischen Weltmarktes. J. L. Schmidt. K. H. Domdey. Verlag die Wirtschaft, Berlin. 276 pp.
 The Sea Bed. (Translated from the Russian by L. Lasker), V. Zenkovich. Lawrence & Wishart. 60 pp. 3s.
 The Origin of the Earth. (Translated from the Russian by Geo. H. Hannor). Lawrence & Wishart. 138 pp. 4s. 6d.
 John Milton. V. Duncan Jones. International Institute for Peace. 192 pp.

BOOKLETS

- Foreign Trade of the U.S.S.R. Soviet Booklet No. 37. 38 pp. 4d.
 Soviet People Say No to Atom War. Soviet Booklet No. 38. 18 pp. 6d.
 Targets of the Seven-Year Plan for Soviet Economy, 1959-1965. Soviet Booklet No. 43. 82 pp. 6d.
 Bringing Soviet Schools Still Closer to Life. Soviet Booklet No. 44. 23 pp. 4d.

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(Continued from page ii of cover)

You will not have read many poems by Vincent Crossland; he was killed in a Yorkshire pit before he was twenty, some fifteen years ago. He did not live to see the end of the war against fascism, this child of the Hungry 'Thirties. There were many of his generation amongst the miners who 'went to town' last month against the policy which brings back unemployment. Others were older men who had themselves borne the full, terrible weight of it. But also there were young fellows, glimpsing for the first time the well-bred disinterest of those who have no more concern for the man who digs their coal than for a disused tip. For ten years you could read posters about a steady career in mining—rather like a Forces' recruitment poster without the promise of sports facilities. Recently I had to watch a young friend drag on week after week, waiting to be called for training, with no job meanwhile: his disappointment when at last entry to the industry was stopped. So the Navy for him after all—and to see what kind of world?

Many friends and readers were amongst the miners when I went to greet them on their arrival. (There were more friends yet when they left next day, for over 80 had bought the March L.M.) Other workers

will follow them to London on the same errand. This month, for example, the Lancashire Federation of Trades Councils is sponsoring a mass-lobby. So we are glad to welcome on pp. 162 onwards the down-to-earth comments from coal pit and rail depot on how the job of fighting *Against the Tory Offensive* can and should be done. Parliament, the employers' palatial buildings and offices of the Press, which studiously ignores genuine trade union news in favour of fabrications against Communists and militant shop stewards, all should ring with these arguments. (There are even a few trade union headquarters which might benefit by having their serenity a little disturbed.) Next month again we hope to print contributions from readers who have the Know-how and are ready to Show-how. We hope the widest use will be made of this number, for the printed word can carry further than the loudest voice! On page 176 you will find further practical suggestions, with some examples of what readers are already doing. Here I can only say a brief thank you to those who are making their money campaign for them—most generous both in amount and spirit. These will be listed *next* month, in the total received during March.

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Special thanks to the Scots miners who contributed during their march and lobby, £1 1s 0d.

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